THE

Houſe of SUPERSTITION.

A

P O E M.

(Price Six-Pence.)

Denton (Thomas) Rectorate

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1490. de. 3.

THE

Houſe of SUPERSTITION.

A

POEM.

By the Rev^d. Mr. *DENTON.*

Sunt geminæ Somni portæ: quarum altera fertur
Cornea, quâ veris facilis datur exitus umbris.

VIRG. ÆN.

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BIBLIOTECA HISTÓRICA

POEM.

HOUSE OF SUPERSTITION.

THE

THE
Houſe of SUPERSTITION.

A VISION.

I.

WHEN Sleep's all ſoothing Hand with Fetters ſoft
Ties down each Senſe, and lulls to balmy Reſt;
The internal Pow'r, creative Fancy oft
Broods o'er her Treaſures in the formful Breaſt.
Thus when no longer daily Cares engage,
The buſy Mind purſues the darling Theme;
Hence Angels whiſper'd to the ſlumb'ring Sage,
And Gods of old inſpir'd the Heroe's Dream;
Hence as I ſlept, theſe Images aroſe
To Fancy's Eye, and join'd this fairy Scene compoſe.

II.

As, when fair Morning dries her pearly Tears,
The Mountain lifts o'er Miſts its lofty Head;
Thus new to Sight a gothic Dome appears
With the grey Ruſt of rolling Years o'erſpread.
Here SUPERSTITION holds her dreary Reign,
And her lip-labour'd Oriſons ſhe plies
In Tongue unknown, when Morn bedews the Plain,
Or Evening ſkirts with gold the weſtern Skies;
To the dumb Stock ſhe bends, or ſculptur'd Wall,
And many a Croſs ſhe makes, and many a Bead lets fall.

III.

Near to the Dome a magic Pair reſide
Prompt to deceive, and practic'd to confound;
Here hood-winkt *Ignorance* is ſeen to bide
Stretching in darkſom Cave along the Ground.
No Object e'er awakes his ſtupid Eyes,
Nor Voice articulate arreſts his Ears,
Save when beneath the Moon pale Spectres riſe,
And haunt his Soul with viſionary Fears;

Or when hoarſe Winds incavern'd murmur round,
And babbling Echo wakes, and iterates the Sound.

IV.

Where Boughs entwining form an artful Shade,
And in faint Glimmerings juſt admit the Light,
There *Errour* ſits in borrow'd White array'd,
And in Truth's Form deceives the tranſient Sight.
A thouſand Glories wait her opening Day
Her beaming Luſtre when fair *Truth* imparts;
Thus *Errour* would pour forth a ſpurious Ray,
And cheat th'unpractic'd Mind with mimic Arts;
She cleaves with magic Wand the liquid Skies,
Bids airy Forms appear, and Scenes fantaſtic riſe.

V.

A Porter deaf, decrepid, old and blind
Sits at the Gate, and lifts a liberal Bowl
With Wine of wondrous Pow'r to lull the Mind,
And check each vig'rous Effort of the Soul:
Whoe'er unwares ſhall ply his thirſty Lip,
And drink in gulps the luſcious Liquor down,

Shall hapleſs from the Cup Deluſion ſip,
And Objects ſee in Features not their own;
Each way-worn Traveller that hither came,
He lav'd with copious Draughts, and *Prejudice* his Name.

VI.

Within a various Race are ſeen to wonne,
Props of her Age, and Pillars of her State,
Which erſt were nurtur'd by the wither'd Crone,
And born to *Tyranny*, her grieſly Mate:
The firſt appear'd in Pomp of purple Pride,
With triple Crown erect, and throned high;
Two golden Keys hang dangling by his Side
To lock or ope the Portals of the Sky;
Crouching and proſtrate there (ah! Sight unmeet!)
The crowned Head would bow, and lick his duſty feet.

VII.

With bended Arm he on a Book reclin'd
Faſt lock'd with Iron claſps from vulgar Eyes;
Heav'n's gracious Gift to light the wand'ring Mind,
To lift fall'n Man, and guide him to the Skies!

A Man no more, a God he would be thought,
And 'mazed Mortals blindly muſt obey:
With ſlight of Hand he lying Wonders wrought,
And near him loathſom Heaps of Reliques lay:
Strange Legends would he read, and Figments dire
Of Limbus' priſon'd Shades, and Purgatory Fire.

VIII.

There meagre *Penance* ſat, in ſackcloth clad,
And to his Breaſt cloſe hugg'd the Viper, Sin,
Yet oft with brandiſh'd Whip would gaul, as mad,
With voluntary Stripes his ſhrivel'd Skin.
Counting large Heaps of o'er abounding good
Of Saints that dy'd within the Church's pale,
With gentler Aſpect there *Indulgence* ſtood,
And to the needy Culprit would retail;
There too, ſtrange Merchandize! he Pardons ſold,
And Treaſon would abſolve, and Murder purge with Gold.

IX.

With ſhaven Crown in a ſequeſter'd Cell
A lazy Lubbard there was ſeen to lay;

No Work had he, ſave ſome few Beads to tell,
And indolently ſnore the Hours away.
The nameleſs Joys that bleſs the nuptial Bed,
The myſtic Rites of Hymen's hallow'd tye
Impure he deems, and from them ſtarts with Dread,
As Crimes of fouleſt ſtain, and deepeſt dye:
No ſocial Hopes hath he, no ſocial Fears,
But ſpends in Lethargy devout the lingring Years.

X.

Gnaſhing his Teeth in mood of furious ire
Fierce *Perſecution* ſat, and with ſtrong Breath
Wakes into living Flame large Heaps of Fire,
And feaſts on Murders, Maſſacres and Death.
Near him was plac'd *Procruſtes'* Iron Bed
To ſtretch or mangle to a certain Size;
To ſee their writhing Pains each Heart muſt bleed,
To hear their doleful Shrieks and piercing Cries;
Yet he beholds them with unmoiſtned Eye,
Their writhing Pains his Sport, their Moans his Melody.

XI.

A gradual Light diffuſing o'er the Gloom,
And ſlow approaching with majeſtic Pace;
A lovely Maid appears in Beauty's Bloom,
With native Charms and unaffected Grace:
Her Hand a clear reflecting Mirrour ſhows,
In which all Objects their true Features wear,
And on her Cheek a Bluſh indignant glows
To ſee the horrid Sorc'ries practis'd there;
She ſnatch'd the Volume from the Tyrant's Rage
Unlock'd it's iron Claſps, and ope'd the heavenly Page.

XII.

" My Name is TRUTH, and you, each holy Seer,
" That all my Steps with ardent gaze purſue,
" Unveil, ſhe ſaid, the ſacred Myſteries here,
" Give the celeſtial Boon to public View.
" Tho' blatant *Obloquy* with leprous Mouth
" Shall blot your Fame, and blaſt the generous Deed,
" Yet in revolving Years ſome liberal Youth
" Shall crown your virtuous Act with Glory's meed,

" Your Names adorn'd in * GILPIN's poliſh'd page
" With each hiſtoric grace, ſhall ſhine thro' ev'ry Age.

XIII.

" With furious Hate tho' fierce relentleſs Pow'r
" Exert of Torment all her horrid Skill;
" Tho' your Lives meet too ſoon the fatal Hour
" Scorching in flames, or writhing on the wheel;
" Yet when the † Dragon in the deep Abyſs
" Shall lye, faſt bound in adamantine Chain,
" Ye with the Lamb ſhall riſe to ceaſeleſs Bliſs,
" Firſt-fruits of Death, and Partners of his Reign;
" Then ſhall repay the momentary Tear
" The great Sabbatic Reſt, the millenary Year."

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* The Reverend Mr. WILLIAM GILPIN, Author of the Lives of BERNARD GILPIN and Biſhop LATIMER, and of the Lives of WICLIFF, and the principal of his Followers, not yet publiſhed.

† See Revel. Chap. 20. and the learned and ingenious Biſhop of BRISTOL's Comment upon it, in the 3d Vol. of his Diſſertation on the Prophecies.

FINIS.